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ABSTRACT

Long-range planning from the point of view of the multicampus system is discussed. The need for long-range planning generally is indicated, and special planning problems for the large multicampus district are described. A planning process model that is being developed by the Los Angeles Community College District to meet planning needs is discussed. (DB)

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THE FUTURE AND LONG-RANGE PLANNING-STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE AND REDIRECTION

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From the point of view of the Multi-Campus System:

It is good to be back in Plumas County. My great grandfather was buried in Crescent Mills in 1895. My great grandmother was buried in Greenville in 1882, after having crossed the Isthmus of Panama in 1859. My Mother went to school just down the road a piece.

I have been asked to say a few words about long-range planning -- strategies for change and redirection, from the point of view of the multi-campus system. I would like first to make a few comments about the need for long-range planning generally, then present what I think are special planning problems for the large multi-campus district, and finally, describe a planning process we are developing hopefully to meet our needs.

The Need for Long-Range Educational Master Planning

Planning is certainly not new in education, or elsewhere. Education is facing challenges which are not unlike those faced by most major industries. We, like most institutions, need to emphasize future planning so that all resources may be used to the best advantage to meet institutional goals.

The budget we each have is a plan. The class schedule is a plan. The college catalog and the college calendar are plans. In California we all must have facilities plans. All the policies and procedures which we look upon for guidance and operation of our institutions essentially represent plans.

Planning is a basic function of management. In the literature on management, planning is indicated as being the first function, followed by organizing. In other words, before we can get organized we have to plan. Planning takes place in each major function of a college.

What is most interesting to me is that with all the "mini plans" we have, such as some of those just mentioned, and with the need for planning, I have yet to see a comprehensive, long-range educational planning is much more difficult than any other kind of planning I know about. In fact, it is especially difficult now. The rapid growth environment (both clients and dollars) we all experienced for most of our careers did not really demand "hard decision" long-range planning. Sure it demanded planning, but it was planning to add faculty, to add facilities, and to add to the budgets. We had the public support because they saw our massive enrollments in straight-line projections and they saw the glorious results of a college education. In this environment real comprehensive planning was not demanded of us.

Now some of us find we must subtract faculty and staff, live with underutilized facilities, tighter budgets, and develop marketing strategies in an effort to keep enrollments from declining. And what dramatic changes we see in the job situation for a college graduate!! I think one set of figures from

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the Bureau of the Census gives some evidence of this problem in just one area. The net increase in jobs for scientists and engineers was 52,000 annually between 1961 and 1965, it jumped to 91,600 annually in 1966 and 1967, and slid to 25,400 annually in 1969 and 1970. And a sociologist has recently stated that "...if the meaningful jobs that college graduates aspire to do not exist, only the federal government will be able to create such jobs on a mass basis as an alternate to major social trouble." (I might add parenthetically that that solution might well lead to a whole different set of "major social troubles.")

And, of course, there are many other changes now occurring. The nature of our clients is changing rapidly and the fare they expect is different from what the previous clients expected. State agencies are demanding more and more accountability. All of this, plus the need to make more massive and faster shifts of programs, including the elimination of programs, will no longer make it possible for us to avoid real long-range educational master planning - the making of hard decisions.

Special Long-Range Planning Problems in the Multi-Campus District

Enough about planning generally. Let me mention just two special problems we are having in our early planning efforts. The first is related to local campus autonomy. How, in an eight-college district, do we plan to meet the needs of our clients and achieve economy, efficiency and reduction of competition among institutions for funds, without impairing initiative, flexibility, and diversity? This was our major concern as we worked this past year to develop the planning process I will outline in a minute. We won't know for a few years what kind of answer our planning process will provide to that question. We only know "we have met the enemy and they are us."

A second problem, not unique in a multi-campus district, but magnified I am sure by the number of colleges in a given district, is how to get real staff involvement on a broad scale - not total staff involvement, but real involvement by key people. This, too, we wrestled with as we developed our process for planning. As I outline the process we are developing, you will recognize the need for deep involvement by College and District staff.

A Planning Process Model

We divided our educational master planning activity into several steps. First we felt we should determine where we have been and where we want to go in order to get the foundation for a plan. This, of course, has been going on continuously, in one form or another, and is currently being sharpened, partially because of these planning efforts and partially because three of our colleges are involved in the beginnings of project USHER's MBO development. Step two involves the activities which are associated with planning the process required to achieve the goals which we have established in step one. We spent 1973-74 at steps one and two. A long-range planning committee was established, consisting of College and District personnel representing all planning areas. The committee's primary task was to develop a process which would involve all elements of the Colleges and the District. Our goal now is to field test the process in 1974-75.

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The current model of the planning process looks like this (see attachment). Let me speak to this theoretical model in practical terms. In deciding how to implement the model they developed last year, the planning committee first decided that the term of the plan would be five years, revised annually. There seems to be a growing consensus that this makes more sense than the ten-year plan. At the same time another critical motivational decision was made. The colleges already prepare annually a budget, an annual report, and a facilities plan. If these documents are to be based on the long-range educational plan, as we think they should, the plan should in fact form the basis for their development. The plan should make the preparation of those documents easier. The plan should not be just an additional assignment, with little or no relationship to all the other assignments facing the colleges. This means that we hope our field test will serve as the basis for the 1975-76 budget, facilities plan, and annual report for each college.

With these things in mind, the committee next worked on how best to get the functions mentioned in the second and third columns of the model involved in the 1974-75 test of the process. All of those functions had, as I mentioned earlier, representation on the planning committee. These people met many times to develop planning forms and guides for the field test to begin this fall.

Looking at the student services plan, let me give some examples of what I mean by planning forms. All the Deans of Student Personnel Services in the District will receive standard worksheets for development of objectives, for projecting and justifying program needs to meet the objectives, and for projecting resource needs to support the programs. The purpose of the field test is, of course, to find out what changes need to be made in the worksheets - where new ones are needed, or which ones should be discarded.

The different areas on the model have different worksheets, depending on the special planning needs of that area. As an example of this, and also as an example of the need for broad staff involvement, let's take a look at educational programs. Not only will the instructional administration and department chairmen be involved in the kind of activities just mentioned under student personnel, but other special programs will be involved. Faculty will have to prepare projected needs for instructional support and supplemental services; those responsible for developing Media Oriented Instruction will do the same, as will those working in extended access programs.

As you can see, the planning process is really the development of a series of mini plans by college and blending them into one master plan for the total District.

The completion of the planning process will give us our required facilities plan by the date required by the State, and it will give us our budget input by the date required by our Fiscal Services staff. At the end of each year a college president can examine the objectives set forth in the plan, determine whether or not they were attained, and use this as the basis of his annual report to the Chancellor.

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Clear to all of us here is the realization that model drawing or worksheet development do not a meaningful long-range plan make. The proof of the process is at the other end of the pipeline. We must measure the results of the process and revise accordingly. We will continue to strive for the perfected plan. In the meantime we will operate on the assumption that just as a sense of humor is better than no sense at all, an imperfect plan is better than no plan at all.

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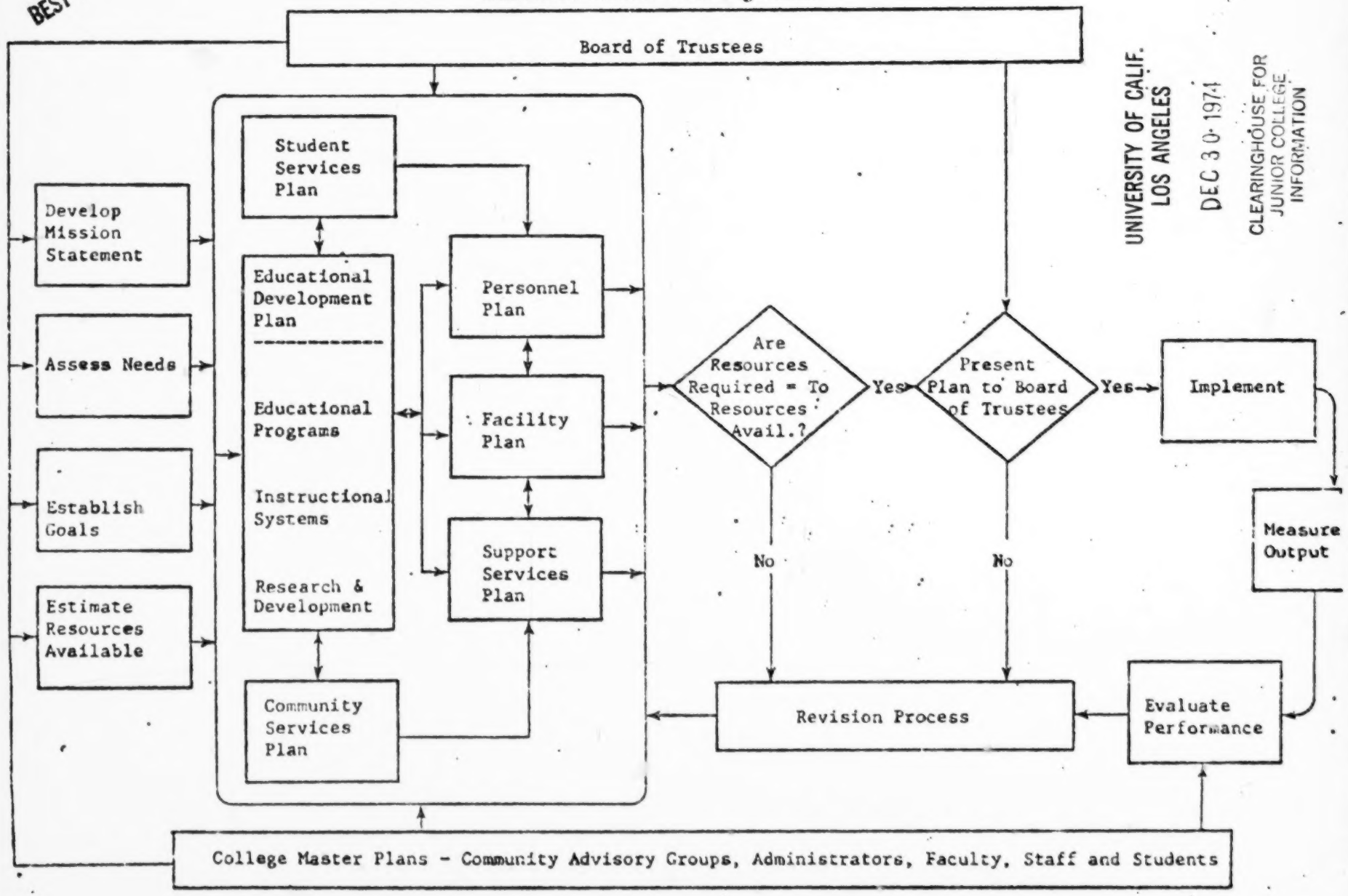
LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
Division of Educational Planning & Development

Education Master Planning Model



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